

# The Mystery of the Silver Dagger

By Randall Parrish

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"The Strange Case of Cavendish"

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## THE PLOTTERS.

Prologue—In a New York jewelry store Philip Peters, United States consular agent, noticed a small box which attracted him. He purchased it. Later he discovered in a secret compartment a writing giving a clue to a revolutionary movement in the country, indicating a plot to overthrow the Cuban government but evidently international in character. The writing mentioned a rendezvous and several details to investigate. Finding the place mentioned in the writing apparently deserted, Peters made a search in the vicinity. A woman in the place is said to be a man's secretary by appointment and several of his employees are said to be in the place.

## CHAPTER II—Continued.

The street was deserted and rain-swept, the few lights showing more plainly in the darkness. I passed straight across the street, as though headed for the nearest car line, and then, in the shade of darkness, retraced my steps, passing the corner, until I attained the side entrance. Here, assured that I was safely beyond observation, I paused to gain some conception of my surroundings. Across from where I stood appeared the dim outlines of a long, ramshackle building apparently a shed of some kind, while beyond the shed was a row of one-story dwelling houses, seemingly exactly alike, and exhibiting no evidence of being occupied.

In which direction had the couple turned after their exit through the side door of the saloon—to right, or left?

Jane had unconsciously pointed in this direction when he told of where the girl lived, and although that was doubtless a lie intended to deceive, it was no more than natural for him to have thoughtfully designated the proper point of the compass.

I advanced cautiously, finding the narrow sidewalk one of boards, in very bad condition. It was only when I attained the end of this row of houses, and came to the entrance of a narrow, dark alley, that I found the slightest proof that I was, by good fortune, upon the right trail. It was above this opening that the incandescent bulb flickered dimly, yet, in spite of wind and rain, gave me glimpses of the mud underfoot. The two must have been the only ones passing that way since the drizzle began, for their footprints were yet visible in the soft mud of the crossing as they advanced beyond the safety of the board walk. By bending low and keeping my own shadow out of the way, I was able to trace their progress for two or three yards quite easily, and then, to my surprise, the footprints turned abruptly to the left, and disappeared entirely.

To all appearances the two had proceeded down the alley. Black, uninviting, as that gloomy passage way seemed they must have turned into it and groped their way forward. Where? For what purpose? I could think of but one object—the Alva factory, the mysterious meeting place at 735 Gans street. Beyond all question this alley would skirt along the back of that building, and there would be an entrance at the rear.

Differing in opinion as to whether I was, knowing nothing of what I might encounter, I hesitated, my heart beating like a trip-hammer, yet, after all the danger seemed more as the imagination than reality. Besides I was still young, and venturesome; the situation appealed to me, and—well, the memory of that girl's face remained strangely insistent. Odd as it may seem, her predicament yielded me a reckless desire to have an immediate hand in the game.

I found two imprints of her narrow shoe in the mud after the turn had been made, then all trace vanished. I crept forward, enveloped in gloom, keeping as closely as possible to the high board fence at the left. The way was rough underfoot, and my progress consequently slow, being anxious to make as little noise as possible. The passage was so black, I lost all knowledge as to how far I had gone, and was only aroused to my position by finally coming up against a pile of lumber which completely blocked the further end of the alley. I recalled dimly that the passage swerved here, running along the side of the Alva factory, until it reached Gans street. Then the place I sought was to my left, behind the protection of this high fence, along which I had been so cautiously feeling my way.

The silence was profound, stupefying, uncanny. Against the lighter lead of the upper sky I was barely able to trace the upper story of the building, but it was all black, a gloomy, deserted hole. Any faith I might have had that the two I had attempted to follow had come there vanished as I strained my eyes for some gleam of light, or any other sign to denote their presence within. I still believed they had turned down the alley, but this was not their goal; beyond doubt they had entered some gate along the way, and thus escaped me entirely.

I hardly knew what impelled me to grope my way back along the fence, blindly feeling for a gate. Curiosity,

no doubt, and a lingering desire to make certain of what was inside the barrier. The entrance was easily found, a more wooden door, held by an iron clasp, which opened instantly to my touch. I stepped inside, closing it quietly behind me, and stared uneasily about through the enshrouding blackness.

My eyes, grown accustomed to the gloom, made out dim outlines, encouraging further exploration. Discovering ample space, and what felt to my feet like a walk, I turned the corner in search. At that moment the gate latch clicked sharply, and I sank down into the black ground shadow, every nerve tingling with alarm. The gate opened almost noiselessly, yet up strained ears could detect its stealthy movement and hear the crunch of a heavy footstep on the under path within. The fellow evidently knew his way even in that darkness, for there was no hesitancy in his movements, no uncertainty. He faded away along the rear wall, and I became aware that he had turned about the further corner. That would naturally mean there was a door there. I had evidently been watching the wrong side.

Assured the man had vanished, and that he sought entrance to the building through some passage well known to him, I crept forth along the wall, crawled low in the shadow, being every precaution against discovery. All that was venturesome in me held high carnival and nothing of danger now should have held me back. I reached the corner around which the fellow had disappeared, but, in the intense blackness, could perceive no movement beyond, no sign of any presence. I listened eagerly, scarcely venturing to breathe, and in another moment was rewarded by hearing the gentle tap of knuckles on wood a few feet away. There could be no doubt of the number—two raps, a pause, three raps, the very signal mentioned in the letter. I waited still breathless, uncertain what had occurred, yet convinced the man ahead had been given entrance.

I lingered longer to withstand the strain I took a step forward into the darkness. At that instant the latch of the gate clicked behind me.

## CHAPTER III.

### Within the Factory Walls.

I stood as though paralyzed with one foot uplifted, a hand pressed against the wall, unable to move.



I Could Perceive Something of the Fellow Now.

There was nothing I could do to avert discovery, no place in which I could crouch in hiding. The newcomer moved swiftly, knowing his way through the darkness, and I had scarcely opportunity to even-glance backward when he rounded the corner and bumped into me.

"What the h—ll!" he exclaimed, startled at the encounter. "Why, d—n it, Charlett, what are you slouching here for? You're Charlett, ain't you?"

"Yes," I muttered, the assent actually frightened out of me; then added lamely, "I couldn't remember the signal."

The fellow laughed softly, releasing his grip on my coat.

"If you attended more meetings you'd be better perfect," he said, his English without an accent. "Where have you been the last month—out of town?"

"In Washington," I ventured, praying the swift answer might suffice.

"Oh, I see," more heartily. "So you were the one Alva sent? Did the woman come back with you?"

The woman? Who could he mean but the same girl who had been waiting in the saloon? I had ventured already too far to draw back; I must take yet another chance, an answer.

"Not with me; that would be too risky. She is here, though."

"Good enough. That means money. Let's go in."

He pushed past, and I followed, to-

tally unable to determine in my own mind what to do. The fellow in the darkness evidently mistook me for some one of the gang. His confidence in my identity as Charlett might have been entrance—but what then? That I was not Charlett would certainly be revealed by the first gleam of light, and I would be helpless. I was alone, unarmed, and these fellows, beyond question, were engaged in a desperate game. I am sure I should never have ventured it had not my companion suddenly turned and grasped my sleeve.

"You saw Mendez, of course?"

"Sure."

"And he vouched for her; he says she is all right?"

"He chose her; that ought to be enough."

"H—ll, I suppose so, but even Mendez has made mistakes. Here's the door."

He rapped lightly, his fingers still gripping my sleeve in a grasp of friendship. I could have broken away, and ran for it, but something mysterious held me, some old fascination of danger. I saw nothing, heard nothing, yet had an instinctive feeling that a narrow whisker had opened in the door, through which our dim outlines were being scrutinized. I held my breath expectantly.

"Who is there?" the voice was a mere whisper, so close as to startle me.

"Gasper White," was the answer, in the same low tone. "I'll."

"What work?"

"Cervantes."

"But there are two of you."

"Yes, this is one of us. It's all right, Juan; I'll know for him."

The fellow inside grumbled something in indistinguishable Spanish, but opened the door slightly, just far enough for me to slip through one at a time. I felt Gasper press past me, and was aware that the guard closed and barred the door, but could see nothing; not even my own hand before my eyes.

A latch clicked softly, and a dim ray of light broke in upon us from a revealed passage beyond. It was so faint as to scarcely render features visible, and, as my coat collar was still upturned, I pressed forward close behind White without discovery. I could perceive something of the fellow now, a rather squat figure, concealed by a long, sparsely trimmed beard, and horn spectacles. His features were clearly foreign, yet failed to bespeak the fighting type. I placed him as a theoretician, a professor, perhaps, in some small college.

But my thoughts were not so occupied with my guide as with the problem of how I was to escape from him. I dare not go on into the presence of others, where discovery that I was not Charlett would be immediate. At any cost I must avoid such exposure—but how? The place in which we were gave me little inspiration. It was a low passage-way, flanked by rough board walls, instantly driving home upon me the impression that it had been constructed for the very purpose for which it was now being utilized—a secret entrance to prevent any gleam of light from being seen without. This precaution, coupled with the tightly boarded passage, left the whole building apparently deserted and desolate, to any chance watcher without. This was evidently no common vulgar hand of schemers, but men with a definite purpose in view, which they were engaged in carrying out with true secret efficiency. They were plotting revolution. Only a strange chance had given me the clue, and only a reckless persistence had opened a way before me. Now my life was no longer my own; it belonged to my country. I must live to expose these men. But how?

My heart failed me as I stared about at the bare walls, and forward to where a heavy curtain draped the end of the passage. This widened as we advanced, so as to form what evidently had been designed as a cloakroom. Wine stopped and removed his coat, appropriating an unoccupied nail, and I followed his example, rejoicing to observe that he still remained so confident of my identity as to not once glance around in my direction. The fellow seemed obsessed with some special desire, for he swept his eyes over the swinging garments, and exclaimed: "Not half of them here yet. I want a word with Alva before the show opens, Charlett, so you better go right on in. See you later."

## Fifty-Fifty on a Million

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Fit for the Gods." Fragrant woods have always been held in highest esteem among primitive people and were considered especially pleasing to the gods, says the American Forestry Magazine. Accordingly, they have figured prominently in their religious ceremonies and burial rites. Sandalwood is of the first rank.

The man whose only thought is for himself has little use for brains.

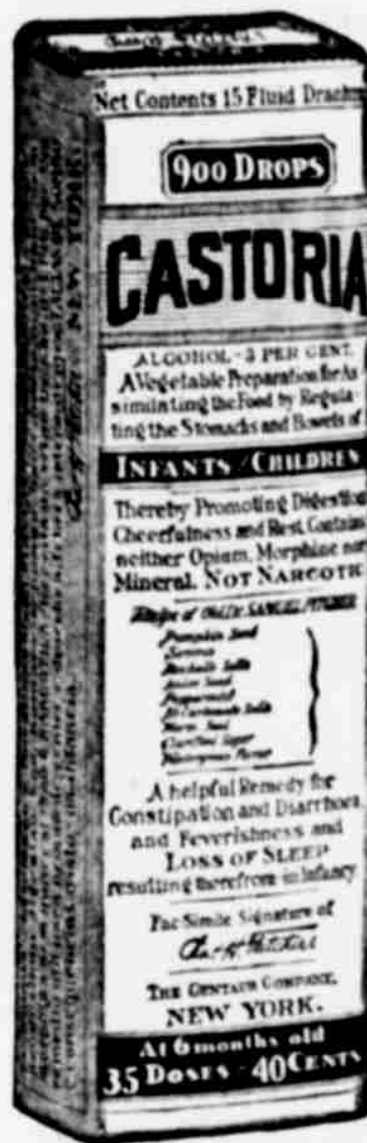
## Baby Specialists.

THAT there are Physicians who specialize on Infant ailments you know. All Physicians understand Infant troubles: all Physicians treat them. It is his profession, his duty, to know human ills from the Stork to the Great Beyond.

But in serious cases he calls in the Specialist. Why? He knows as every Mother knows, or ought to know, that Baby is just a baby, needing special treatment, special remedies.

Can a Mother be less thoughtful? Can a Mother try to relieve Baby with a remedy that she would use for herself? Ask yourself; and answer honestly!

Always remember that Baby is just a baby. And remembering this you will remember that Fletcher's Castoria is made especially for Infants and Children.



Exact Copy of Wrapper.

## Children Cry For Fletcher's CASTORIA

### The False and the True.

Advertising by the use of large space, the expenditure of huge sums of money have placed on the market, have put in your home, perhaps, many articles that today have been discarded, as you will readily admit. Do you recall anything that has more modestly appealed to the public than has Fletcher's Castoria: modest in all its claims, pleading at all times—and truthfully—for our babies?

The big splash, the misleading claims may win for a time, but the honest truth-telling advertiser is like the old story of the tortoise that beat the hare.

Mothers everywhere, and their daughters, now mothers, speak frankly, glowingly, enthusiastically in praise of Fletcher's Castoria. Speak of it lovingly as a friend that has brought comfort, cheer and smiles to their little-ones.

To them; to these true mothers no argument can induce them to set aside their bottle of Castoria, their old friend, that they might try even another and unknown remedy for babies. Then, would YOU think of going to YOUR OWN medicine chest to find relief for Baby's troubles? Can you not separate the false from the true?

MOTHERS SHOULD READ THE BOOKLET THAT IS AROUND EVERY BOTTLE OF FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

## GENUINE CASTORIA ALWAYS

Bears the Signature of

Chas. H. Fletcher.

THE CENTAUR COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

The next time you buy calomel ask for



The purified and refined calomel tablets that are harmless, safe and sure. Medicinal virtues retained and improved. Sold only in sealed packages. Price 35c.

## No News to Him.

A regimental band was about to be organized at one of the war-time cantonments and, after the first rehearsal, the officer in charge was signing up the candidates.

"Your name?" he asked the trombonist.

"Sam Jones," returned the embryo trombonist.

"Your station?"

"Camp Devens."

"Your rank?"

"I know it," sighed Sam.—The American Legion Weekly.

Similar Experiences. Mabel—"The doctor says he has saved her life nine times." Eva—"I always did think she was a cat."

## Health and Vigor Win in The Race of Life

In these days of fast competition only full-blooded, robust, healthy people can keep to the front. Unhealthy weaklings with disordered blood are bound to fall behind. Success is yours only if you have the snap, vigor and magnetism that go with a wholesome, rich blood supply. Don't despair because others forge ahead of you. Start right now to

free your circulation of the impurities that are hampering your health and progress. Thousands have done this with S.S.S., the famous old herb blood remedy. Get S.S.S. from your druggist today, and after you have started taking, write for special medical counsel to Chief Medical Advisor, 845 Swift Laboratory, Atlanta, Georgia. It's free.



USED 50 YEARS AS A TONIC

## Bad Stomach Sends Her to Bed for 10 Months

Antonio Gets Her Up!

"Over a year ago," says Mrs. Doris Williams, "I took to bed and for 10 months did not think I would live. Antonio helped me so much I am now up and able to work. I recommend it highly for stomach trouble."

Antonio helps people to get well by taking up and carrying out the excess acidity and gases that put the stomach out of order. If you have indigestion, sourness, heartburn, belching, food rejecting, or other stomach distress, take an Antonio after each meal. Big bottles only a trifle with your druggist's guarantee.

## ABSORBINE

Will reduce Inflamed, Strained, Swollen Tendons, Ligaments, Muscles. Soothe the lameness and pain from a Spinal Side Bone or Bone Spavin. No harm, no hair gone and horse can be used. \$2.50 a bottle at druggists or delivered. Describe your case for special instructions and interesting horse Book 2 R Free. ABSORBINE, JR., the antiseptic liniment for man, animal, and horse. Strained, Torn Ligaments, Swollen Glands, Venes or Muscles. Heals Cuts, Sores, Ulcers, Allergic pain. Price \$1.50 a bottle or delivered. Send "Absorbine" to W. F. YOUNG, Inc., 210 Temple St., Springfield, Mass.

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## FRUIT FOR BRINGS HEALTH

The kind of health that needs no physic, pill, oil, mineral water, internal bath or enema. Gives relief, comfort, energy. Money-back guarantee. Send \$1 for Trial Jar.

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